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ABSTRACT

Stressing that the importance of listening carefully cannot be underestimated, this handbook describes the process of listening (including the five components--previous knowledge, listening material, physiological activity, attention, and intellectual activity), some barriers to efficient listening, and bad and good listening habits. It also discusses research in listening (value of listening instruction, listening and reading, instructional effects, learner characteristics); the role of the teacher, student, and administrator in listening instruction; objectives for listening; the skills of comprehension; and sample activities for listening instruction. Appendixes to sections 2 and 3 include an outline of the listening process, a checklist of listening behaviors for teachers, a sample listening assessment item, and a six-page list of references. (HOD)

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INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

LISTENING HANDBOOK

SECONDARY LEVEL

FLORENCE SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE

319 SOUTH DARGAN ST.

FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

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LISTENING: AN OVERVIEW

Section I

The Importance of Listening

"Huh?"
"What did you say?"
"Would you mind repeating that?"
"What was that name again?"
"Why didn't you tell me?"

These and similar questions are asked hundreds of times every day. Poor listening seems to permeate our society. Though no definitive figures are available, enormous sums of money and huge blocks of time are lost by business and industry every year because some workers fail to listen to instructions and follow directions. Employees have been known to lose their jobs as a result of sloppy listening habits. In the military, in government, in schools, and in practically every other kind of organization, oral commands and directions are frequently misinterpreted. The resulting confusion can be embarrasssing, costly, and even tragic.

We communicate - speak, read, write, and listen - eight out of every ten working minutes; forty-five percent of this total is time spent listening (Bell 1982). We listen three times as much as we read, five times as much as we write, and one and one-half times as much as we speak (Hook 1965). While poor listeners can be found in every age group, Rossiter maintains that adults are the worst listeners of all. Tests show that immediately after hearing a ten-minute presentation, the average listener has retained only fifty percent of what was said; within two days, only twenty-five percent of the content remains in memory (Steil 1982). These figures represent an apparent decrease in listening facility in the adult population over a period of less than twenty years. Donaghue (1982) underscored the frustration that develops from poor listening:

> All too often our meetings are diminishing to both speaker and listener. We want to listen, but something intervenes so that nothing creative can take place. We end up feeling disappointed.

If we are to gain personal and professional satisfaction from our encounters, we need to have keen listening skills. The words of Sells (1973) are applicable to our society as a whole:

> We're too glib about listening. We've been doing it all our lives. We assume we're good at it, when, in fact, few of us <u>are</u> good at listening.

The importance of listening carefully cannot be underestimated. Students must be made aware of this critical language skill. The checklist in the appendix may be useful in this regard. When discussing reasons for developing proficiency in aural skills, teachers may want to have students develop lists to share with the class. Their ideas may be compared with those of Sells (1973), who said that we listen for these reasons, among others:

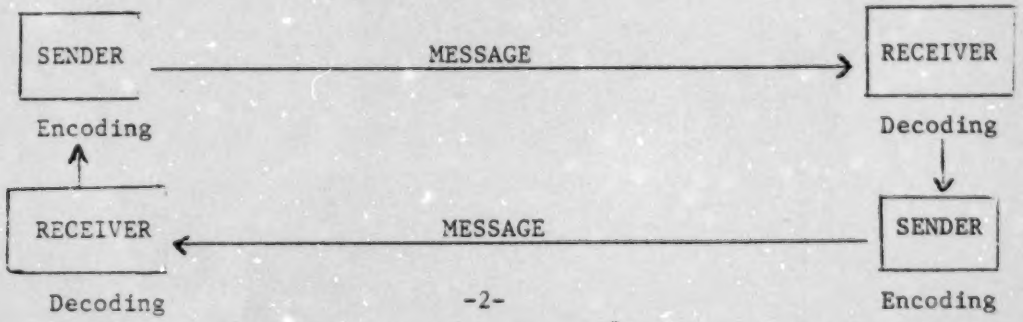
-To gain new information
-To share ideas, thoughts, feelings
-To reaffirm and support each other
-To gain self-fulfillment
-To understand how much, or how little, the other person knows
-To develop wholesome attitudes
-To improve our social behavior
-To improve our critical thinking skills

Perhaps we cannot do any of these effectively without a commitment for the communication process, which involves transacting with others. We would do well to heed the words of Epictetus, a Greek slave, who wrote in 90 A.D., "Nature has given to men one tongue but two ears, that we may hear from others twice as much as we speak" (Robinson and Lee 1965).

Listening: The Foundation of Communication

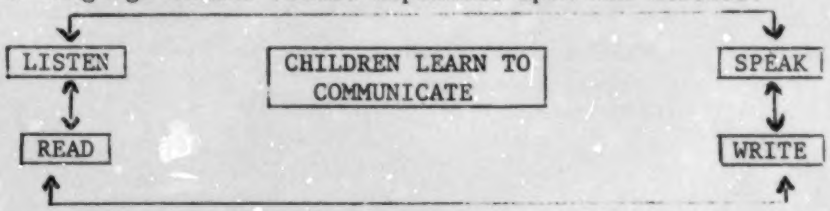
Listening is the first language skill to appear. There is evidence that unborn babies develop the ability to listen (Lundsteen 1979). As children grow, their language skills develop and become more refined. They listen before they talk, talk before they read, and read before they write. The research done by Brown (1954) points toward a progressive sequence or hierarchial interdependence among these language skills.

Most children learn to communicate naturally, largely as a result of environmental influences. From the time a baby enters the world, he is surrounded by all kinds of sounds. If his hearing is normal, the child will soon learn to imitate vocally the symbols (words) he encounters in the home. He uncounsciously, and quite naturally, becomes a participant in the communication process by serving as both sender and receiver of messages:



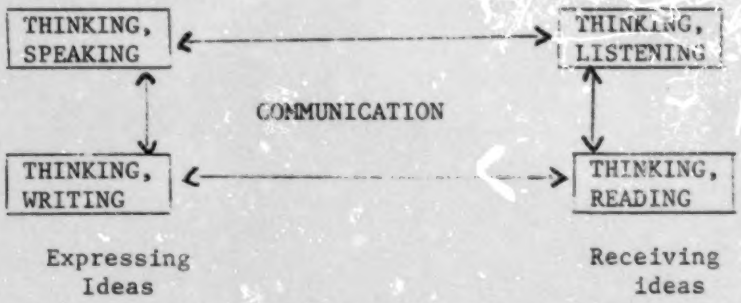
When the child has a need or desire to send a message, he does so by encoding his thoughts in spoken symbols (words), which he transmits. The listener receives the sounds, which are quickly decoded by the brain. If necessary or desirable, a response is given to the child.

As the child progresses toward adolescence and adulthood, the same kind of process is followed when communication takes place. Eventually, all four language skills become dependent upon one another.



In this model, adapted from the work of Lundsteen (1979), the skills on the left, listening and reading, can be referred to as the receptive skills because they permit the brain to receive and decode language in written and spoken form. The skills on the right, speaking and writing, can be designated expressive skills because of their encoding functions. The research of Strickland (1962) reinforces the contention that a positive correlation exists among the four language facilities; limited skills in one area many hinder skills in other areas Thus, a child who consistently listens poorly may be a poor reader, writer, or speaker.

Russell and Hennings (1979) have elaborated upon the previous model to include thinking, which they insist should be considered the fifth language skill.



A major conclusion that can be drawn from examination of this diagram is that the language arts are in constant interaction. To elaborate, the English class in which only one or two skills are stressed cannot possibly be providing students with necessary communication skills. Students must be given numerous opportunities to engage in learning experiences involving all the language areas; fragmented instruction in English is neither wise nor defensible.

APPENDIX

HOW WE IMPROVE OUR LISTENING

How would you rate yourself?

	Point Value	Your Score
1. Do you make it a point to repeat the other person's name in the conversation after an introduction?	10	
2. When meeting a person for the first time, do you try to associate the person's name with some other person, thing, or event?	10	
3. If you do not hear the person's name distinctly during an introduction, do you ask the person to repeat or spell his name?	10	
4. Do you always try to be a good listener when others are talking?	10	
5. Do you avoid interrupting the speaker?	15	
6. When being given directions, do you repeat the directions to make sure you have them right?	15	
7. Can you recite to yourself the main points of a speech after you have heard it?	20	
8. Do you usually take notes when listening to a lecture?	10	
TOTAL	100	

(Paul D. Brandes and William S. Smith, Building Better Speech, 1964, p.222.)

HOW LISTENING WORKS

Section II

The Process of Listening

While it comprises one part of the communication chain, listening is also a process in itself. It is, in essence, a process taking place within the framework of another process. An examination of the steps involved in listening should help teachers determine priorities for instruction.

According to Lundsteen (1979), five components of listening emerge from most analyses. They are:

Previous knowledge
Listening material
Physiological activity (hearing, sensation, perception)
Attention or concentration
Highly conscious, intellectual activity
(at the time of listening and beyond)

The last three elements in this list can be analyzed further by separating them into ten steps usually taken by a proficient listener:

Hear
Hold in memory
Attend
Form images
Search the past store of ideas
Compare
Test the cues
Recode
Get meaning
Intellectualize beyond the moment

Although this list seems overly complex, all the steps are essential if good listening is to occur. This is true in children, adolescents, and adults. The elimination of one step can cause a breakdown in the communication system, just as the omission of an important step in programming a computer can ruin the program.

Like the elements of the writing process, the components of listening must all be present but not necessarily in a rigid order. There is much overlapping, reexamining and remodeling among them. At certain times, the steps may even take place simultaneously.

A look at the first two parts of the process, previous knowledge and listening material, will show why effective auding cannot take place without them.

Previous Knowledge (Component One)

A work of literature remains merely a collection of inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols. (Rosenblatt 1976).

The complex metamorphosis of marks into meaning results from the interaction of a number of factors, including the background experiences and knowledge the reader brings to the text. Likewise, our transformation of sounds into meaning depends largely upon our previous knowledge (facts, rules, ideas, attitudes, values, beliefs, vocabulary). If we lack such background, we can still hear, but we are not really listening with comprehension.

For example, an American tourist in Berlin will probably have a difficult time transacting his affairs unlesss he has some knowledge of German. In addition, a college student who enrolls in an advanced physics course cannot succeed unless he has a good foundation in basic physics and mathematics. A remarkable example of the need for background is provided in one teacher's experience with a group of deprived children in Berkeley County, South Carolina. The teacher was amazed to find that her class did not know the meaning of the word banana, although they could pronounce and spell it. The next day, she gave each child a real banana, only to find that they didn't know how to peel the fruit. One little girl, after finally peeling her banana with the teacher's help, ate the peel! These children had heard the word banana, but they had no previous knowledge that would help them understand its meaning.

The lack of a store of information does not mean that the listener is stupid. The children in the previous example may have had agile minds and great potential. Their cultural deprivation caused their language experiences to be limited, except with words that had immediate use to them. Teachers need to keep in mind the background of students as lessons are planned and presented. One of the most effective ways to check for comprehension of spoken language is to ask the listener to tell, in his or her own words, what was meant. Another simple but worthwhile technique is to ask from time to time, "Do you understand?" "Do you see what I mean?" Occasional summaries by both the teacher and students can supplement and reinforce previous knowledge.

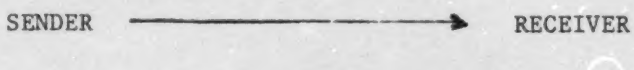
Listening Material (Component Two)

Basically, material in the listening process means message. A message can perform one or more of these aims (Lundsteen 1979):

Self-expression (personal, emotive)
Expository (informative, exploratory)
Literary (poetic, dramatic, narrative)
Persuasive (incitive, influential)

The purpose(s) of our message will often determine the way in which we send them. Communication is facilitated by the selection of an appropriate channel, or medium. According to Lundsteen (1979), the medium has an impact on both the message and the receiver. The channel we choose to use for transmission of material may hinder or assist in our receiver's acquistion of that material. As McLuhan has said, the medium is indeed the message.

The media we use involve contacts such as these:



"ONE TO ONE"

"ONE TO MANY"

In "one to one" communication, we may converse with a person face-to-face or by telephone or some other electronic means. Sound waves are used to carry the message, but elements such as tone of voice, tempo, gestures, touch, and feedback all affect the transmission and reception (Lundsteen 1979). In "one to many," TV, radio, or speech to large groups may be used. Usually, direct feedback is not possible in this kind of situation. There are exceptions, though. Teleconferences, communication by computer, and TV/ radio "call-in" shows all allow feedback.

While this discussion may seem theoretical at first, it does have implications for classroom teachers. Children and adolescents need exposure to a variety or listening experiences. Otherwise, they might become satisfied with easy and unchallenging data and other material. They should be encouraged to listen to many kinds of radio broadcasts, to watch quality TV programs, to engage in interesting conversations, to hear stimulating speeches. Furthermore, students need to listen creatively and critically. The valve of a challenging listening diet has been supported by the research of Chomsky (1972) and Klinzing (1972), who found that a low level of complexity of syntactic structure in material heard by children can retard their encoding ability.

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A brief discussion of the other components of listening should reveal how people use several skills when they attend to a message. This information is drawn from the works of Lundsteen (1979) and Goodman in Gephardt (1970).

Physiological Activity (Component Three)

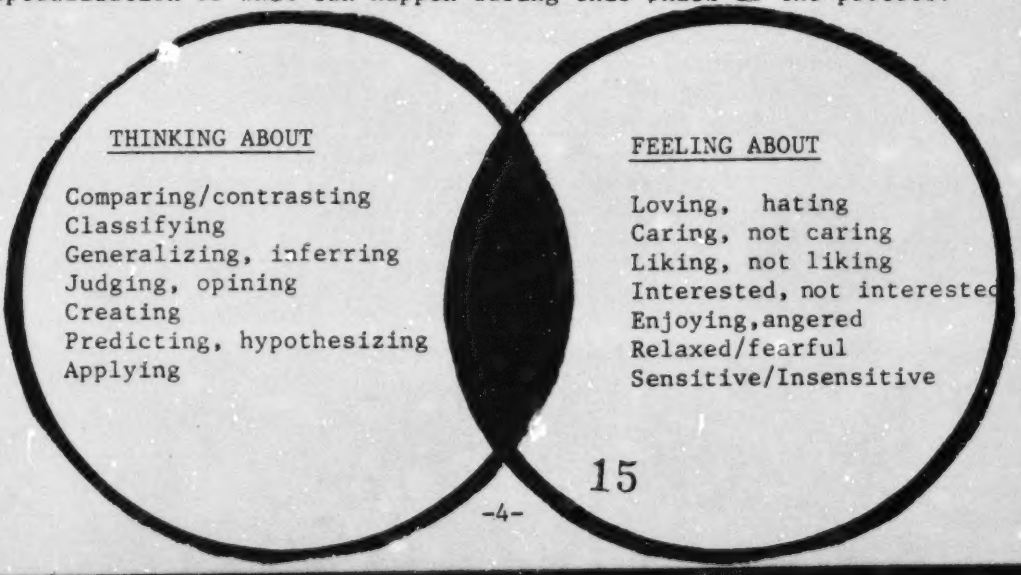
When an oral message is transmitted, it travels by means of sound waves to the listener, who can receive it as a sensory experience. That is, the listener hears sounds, which are immediately transferred to the brain. There, unconsciously, the neural impulses and electrical charges allow dissection of the words and sentences. The message is then retained in the listener's memory. Harris (1969) contended that an inadequate memory span indicates a possible cause of both listening and reading problems.

Attention or Concentration (Component Four)

This activity is sometimes called "tuning in." Here the listener focuses, concentrates, and selects cues from the speech sounds. Perhaps the simplest example of this kind of action is that of a baby turning its head toward its mother's voice. Focusing occurs when the individual directs his attention toward one sound source. Selection may take place when a listener chooses to focus on a particular sound source to the exclusion of others. Concentration is apparent when the listener holds the sounds." Shortly, mental images are formed to match the sound. The brain then sorts through its storehouse of information for related ideas to aid in predicting meaning. These ideas may rapidly be compared with cues from the speaker's message. The listener's brain then makes a rapid hypothesis about the meaning of the material; it tests the cues. At times, the brain will recode the message. This usually occurs in unfamiliar words, terms, or dialects have been used. If the listener's previous knowledge and mental images match the speaker's cues, meaning usually results without recoding.

Highly Conscious Intellectual Activity (Component Five)

The listener's brain decodes the message, allowing literal comprehension ("getting meaning") to take place. The listener may also think beyond the immediate message toward sophisticaed interpretations or intense emotional experience. Russell and Hennings (1970) present this conceptualization of what can happen during this phase of the process:



Because reactions to messages may come from the cognitive or affective domains, emphasis on one domain to the exclusion of the other is not advisable. Students need to examine their likes and dislikes, their biases, and their expectations. Successful, tactful ways of managing feedback originating in the affective domain should also be discussed in class.

A summary diagram of the listening process is included in Appendix I. While it is by no means definitive, it does present the steps in a schematic form that crystallizes the foregoing material and simplifies the complexity of the listening task.

Some Barriers to Efficient Listening

"Hi. How're ya doing?"
"Ok. How're you?"
"All right, I guess what ya been up to?"
"Oh, nothin' much."
"Well, good to see you."
"Yeah, take it easy!"
"Sure, you too."

When we engage in brief conversations such as this, we use a number of clichés, social conventions, and "clipped" answers. Frequently, such comments are time-fillers or evasionary expressions. They can be used out of nervousness, boredom, speed, uncertainty. In situations like these, detailed answers are not expected and would probably astound the listener if they were given. Walter Matthau, the actor, commented in American Film (July-August 1983) on this kind of conversation:

> When someone says, "How are you, Walter," I am not going to tell him if I think he is pretentiously trying to talk to me. Can you imagine my answering, "Well, you see, I have a separation of the chromocioclavicular; therefore my trapezius is shooting pains into my deltoid region, and it goes through the latissimus dorsi up and around the renal spleenal, which, if it comes around the other way, will be a portal cable shut. Therefore, I won't get cirrhosis of the liver." (p. 39)

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Perhaps anyone receiving such an elaborate response to a simple "How are you" would be annoyed. We don't anticipate such reactions because we really don't take our everyday "small talk" very seriously. We listen carelessly or not at all. This passive reception may not cause serious repercussions in most cases, but it can be dangerous if extended to more formal encounters. Moulton (1982) maintains that many of our sloppy listening habits are unconscious and, just for that reason, pose more serious threats to effective communication than we commonly recognize. He believes that carelessness in listening may be caused by any one of three factors - factors inside the speaker, factors outside the listener and factors inside the listener.

Factors Inside the Speaker

Some speakers have pleasing voices, while others cause us agitation or boredom. A major force that shapes our reactions to a speaker is the sound of his voice. If his vocal qualities are not pleasant, his message may not get through to us no matter how hard he tries. Some of the factors affecting vocal characteristics are enunciation of vowels and consonants, use of regional or social dialects, and volume and tone. Inappropriate gestures, unnecessary movement , and eccentric bodily and vocal mannerisms can also distract listeners. In addition, ambiguity (for example, "doublespeak") can be annoying and confusing.

Students need to be encouraged to be tolerant of speakers with such problems as these. Maybe the voice is annoying, the gestures distracting, the mannerisms disturbing. In spite of these interfering behaviors, most speakers sincerely want to communicate well. The mature listener will try to filter out all extraneous factors and attend to the words of the speaker; this is the only decent, civilized thing to do.

Moulton (1982) asserts that some listeners fail to get the substance of a speech because of such factors as

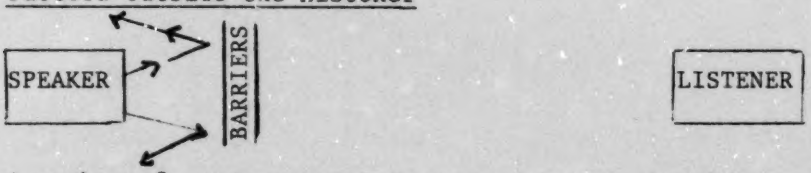
a closed mind
daydreaming
confrontational attitudes
thinking of responses

All of these problems can be controlled through personal effort of the listener. Closed minds and confrontational attitudes often go together, one reinforcing the other . Remembering that free speech is a basic of a democratic society, a good listener will try hard to give the speaker an opportunity to express his views without interruption or hostile

nonverbal responses. The recent "shouting down" of United Nations Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick at several colleges clearly illustrates the need for tolerance and understanding on the part of listeners.

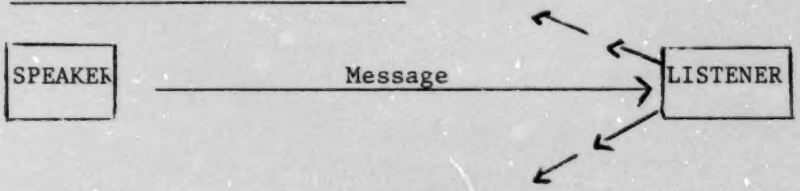
Daydreaming can be controlled by focusing on the speaker's voice, however hard that may be to do. Good listeners will position themselves at a convenient location in the audience and will consciously "zero in" on the presenter to the exclusion of all extraneous factors. Asking "What has he said thus far," "What are his main points," or "Do I agree with this" can be desirable. The wise English teacher will model and foster polite and efficient listening.

Factors Outside the Listener



A number of environmental factors can cause breakdowns in the communication system. Noise from lawn mowers, airplanes, passing automobiles, and other outside sources often interfere with reception of messages. In school, interruptions are frequently caused by bells, crowded halls, intercoms, and fire drills. Teachers and administrators should do everything possible to control these environmental influences. Listeners should be willing to make a conscious effort to concentrate on what the speaker is saying. The skill of filtering out extraneous material in order to get the message does not come easily, but it can be attained through practice.

Factors Inside the Listener



There can be no guarantee that an outstanding talk expertly delivered by a remarkable speaker will be fully internalized by all the listeners when trying to control daydreams.

One of the most common causes of poor listening is that of thinking of a response. This is especially noticeable when the communication scenario is one marked by tenseness and hostility. It is important for listeners to absorb the comments of speakers and react to them tactfully. Spending the speaker's time formulating responses to his earlier comments will often result in embarrassing questions ("What did you say," "Would you mind saying that again," etc). Skilled listeners really listen; they don't just hear audial stimuli.

BAD AND GOOD LISTENING HABITS

Similar to Moulton's ideas are those of Nichols and Stevens (1957), who developed a list of six bad listening habits frequently seen in students. The age of this list does not dimish its importance. It is probable that the comments made by these researchers have more use today than in the 1950s. Unless these habits are changed, there can be no improvement in listening.

QUICK REJECTION OF A SUBJECT AS UNINTERESTING. After a short period of listening, the student comes to the conclusion that the subject is boring. This becomes his excuse for not listening. Both the idea and the information are lost. Never stop listening prematurely; stay with the speaker and you may get a pleasant surprise.

CRITICIZING DELIVERY AND PHYSICAL APPEARANCE. Faced with a speaker he does not want to listen to, the student finds fault with his dress, his vocal pitch, the size of his nose, the way he combs his hair. These dislikes become the reason for not listening to his ideas.

Dress, voice, appearance and mannerisms are important, and as a speaker you should be aware of their influence. But they are not alibis for failure to listen to the content of a speech. Never use such criticisms as an excuse for not listening.

YIELDING EASILY TO DISTRACTIONS. Scarcely any speaking situation is free from distractions. In school, a plane roars overhead, students are noisy in the hall outside - all these and more can occur when you are trying to listen. A good listener will learn to tolerate these things. The bad listener uses minor distractions as an excuse to stop listening and say to himself, "I can't hear the speaker and I'm not going to try."

FAKING ATTENTION. In this the student goes through all of the outward behavior of really listening. He assumes the posture of listening, he looks at the speaker, perhaps nods understandingly now and then. But his mind is far away. He is thinking his own thoughts. John Ruskin, the English critic, said, "When a man is wrapped up in himself, he makes a pretty small package." He fools only himself. What he misses, he will never recover.

"I-GET-THE-FACTS" LISTENING. This bad habit is developed because the student believes he must get all of the facts. The method consists of trying to memorize in order every fact the speaker presents. The student generally bogs down when the facts pile up, and suddenly discovers he has missed the point of the speech. Memorizing facts is not the way to listen. Ideas are the important thing; facts merely support them.

AVOIDING DIFFICULT LISTENING. Often the first impression of a lecture or a speech is that understanding the material is going to require some effort and concentration. After a few words the student concludes that "It's too hard to listen to. I'll pass it up." The result is a decreasing efficiency in all listening, because the student did not try hard enough.

Students should analyze their own listening habits and see whether their skills in listening are weak or strong. Appendix II contains a checklist students may use to assess their habits. The following ten guidelines, also provided by Nichols and Stevens, should help students increase their listening efficiency.

1. FIND THE SUBJECTS OF INTEREST. You increase your effectiveness if you are interested in what is being discussed. As you listen to a speech, be alert for facts that will be useful to you, information to add to your knowledge about things you are already interested in. Trying to discover such items will make you a better listener.

2. JUDGE CONTENT, NOT DELIVERY. Focus your attention on ideas and content. "Listen with your own experience" to what the speaker says, never to his manner of saying it. Raise your level of understanding and you will be a more effective listener.

3. HEAR THE MAN OUT. This is an antidote: for those who prematurely reject a subject; for getting too excited over a minor point to understand the main idea; or for being hurt if a pet idea is attacked. Learn to defer your judgment until you hear the end of the speech.

4. LISTEN FOR IDEAS. As we have said, good listeners focus on ideas; they don't try to memorize facts. It is better to study the language in which central ideas are expressed, recognize the way in which the speaker connects his ideas, and note his summary of the key themes. Concentration on ideas will improve your listening skill.

5. BE FLEXIBLE. In recording what you hear, remember that notetaking is not outlining. Some speeches cannot be outlined; others demand a shift in method in order to record important facts and principles. Adjust your method to the needs of the talk. Be flexible and adaptable.

6. WORK AT LISTENING. Good listening takes energy. Help yourself by investing your energy wisely and efficiently. Give conscious attention through your posture, eyes, and reactions. This will help both you and the speaker.

7. RESIST DISTRACTIONS. Adjust quickly to the "normal" distractions in the listening-speaking situation. Remember this is the noisy century-expect distractions, live with them, learn to listen in spite of them.

8. EXERCISE YOUR MIND. It is possible that you have rarely been challenged by speeches that spurred you to use all your faculties. Arnold Toynbee, one of out most important historians, says all civilization is based on challenge and response. Your response to a challenge of this sort may help decide the type of person you become. To increase your skill try listening to some difficult lectures. You may develop a real enthusiam for them.

9. KEEP AN OPEN MIND. Your convictions, emotions, and prejudices are potential blocks to effective listening. Too often we stop listening when a word, phrase, or idea offends us. Don't shut your mind-let communication teach you freely at all times.

10. CAPITALIZE ON "THOUGHT SPEED." Most people speak about 125 words per minute, but they can think at least four times that fast. Consequently you can be "way ahead" of the speaker. What do you do with this extra thinking time? Do you use your thought speed to advantage in the following ways: (1) anticipate what the speaker is going to say: (2) summarize what has been said; (3) weigh the speaker's material by raising questions, or check it for accuracy in your mind; (4) listen between the lines-discover things not expressed in words, but implied by inflection, or gesture.

St. John (1978) maintains that skilled listeners look for key ideas and main points and attempt to relate them into an organized whole or complete pattern. He says that several of the successful techniques used by effective listeners include:

1. Listening for main ideas (not getting lost in details or distracted by sub-points).

2. Developing genuine interst in the speaker with positive intent.

3. Opening the mind, looking for specific good things about the presentation, and resisting the temptation to disclaim opposing ideas.

4. Making the speaker feel comfortable and at ease.

5. Becoming other-person-centered and tying to understand the cultural background and motivation of the speaker.

6. Overlooking differences in status, position, and seniority while listening (everyone has something to contibute).

7. Avoiding unnecessary interruptions and jumping to conclusions.

8. Asking relevant and penetrating questions (e.g., "Is this what you mean?").

9. Restating and reviewing main points mentally.

10. Perceiving nonverbal cues put forth by speaker and being alert to the need to read between the lines at certain tims.

The same researcher suggests that these attitudes are characteristic of good listeners.

1. Taking the time to listen (this means putting everything else aside for awhile).

2. Giving the speaker your full attention and concentration.

3. Showing consideration and appreciation for the speaker and his views (providing positive feedback).

4. Wanting to hear about new things, different ideas.

5. Attempting to view things from the speaker's viewpoint.

6. Being empathetic and compassionate.

7. Being objective and fair-minded.

8. Recognizing own prejudices and blind spots and compensating for these.

9. Striving to listen for understanding rather than refute.

10. Being willing to ask questions to ascertain if you really understand the speaker.

Appendix III contains a summary of traits of good and poor listeners. Teachers may want to share and discuss the list with students.

APPENDIX I

AN OUTLINE OF THE LISTENING PROCESS

PARTS

1. Previous knowledge
2. Material to be listened to

MAJOR DIVISIONS OF LISTENING ACTIVTY

I. Responding and Organizing

3. Physiological activity of the listener

STEPS FOR A PROFICIENT LISTENER

(1) Hear

(2) Hold in memory

4. Attention or concentration

(3) Attend

(4) Form images

(5) Search past store of ideas

(6) Compare

(7) Test

(8) Recode

5. Highly conscious intellectual activity

II. Getting Meaning

(9) Get meaning(literal comprehension)

III. Thinking Beyond Listening

(10) Intellectualize

(Sara W. Lundsteen, Listening: Its Impact at All Levels on Reading and the Other Language Arts, 1979, p. 19).

APPENDIX II

Checklist of Listening Roadblocks

Check Here

Hearing

1. I often have trouble hearing what people say. ( )
2. The speaker talked too softly. ( )
3. The speaker talked loudly enough, but not clearly. ( )
4. The room was too noisy: ( )
   The noise came from (a) people around me ( )
   (b) outside the building ( )
   (c) the hall ( )
   (d) other sources ( )
   (explain)

Listening

1. I didn't pay attention because I wasn't interested. ( )
2. I didn't pay attention because I was thinking about what I was going to say. ( )
3. The speaker or sounds began before I got settled. ( )
4. I was thinking about other things (explain). ( )
5. I missed some and could not figure out what was going on. ( )
6. I got wrapped up like a cocoon in my own argument and planning. ( )
7. I couldn't understand, so I quit listening. ( )
8. It was hard to keep up because I couldn't figure out what might come next. ( )
9. I listened like a sponge. I got so concerned with details I could not tell the main part from what was just supporting. ( )

Vocabulary

1. These words or sounds were new to me: (1) _____ ( )
   (2) _____ (3) _____ (4) _____ ( )
   (5) _____ ( )

2. I thought the word _____ meant _____ ( )

Skills or things I think I do well in when I'm listening or am showing improvement in are: ( )

(Sara W. Lundsteen, Listening: Its Impact at All Levels on Reading and The Other Language Arts, 1979, p.19.)

APPENDIX III

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD AND POOR LISTENERS

GOOD LISTENERS	POOR LISTENERS
A. Have you the following attitudes toward the listening situation:	
1. Do you want to listen?	1. Are you indifferent or bored?
2. Do you find a personal reason for listening?	2. Are you not clear about why you are listening?
3. Are you willing to do your part in the listening situation?	3. Do you expect the speaker to do all the work?
B. Have you the following attitudes toward the speech:	
4. Are you receptive and open-minded?	4. Are you suspicious or antagonistic?
5. Are you aware of the effect of your own prejudices?	5. Are you unaware of the effect of your own prejudices?
6. Are you willing to hear the speaker out?	6. Do you stop listening at the slightest provocation?
7. Do you make understanding your most important objective?	7. Do you make agreement or disagreement your most important objective?
C. Do you have the following attitudes toward the speaker:	
8. Are you friendly and sympathetic?	8. Are you indifferent or hostile?
9. Do you respect the speaker as a person?	9. Are you critical or suspicious?
D. Do you prepare to listen in the following ways:	
10. Try to learn about the subject.	10. Aren't interested in subject, speaker, or situation.
11. Sit where you can see and hear.	11. Sit where you can avoid listening or leave first.
12. Try to eliminate distractions.	12. Welcome distractions in your environment.
13. Are you ready to take notes appropriate?	13. Can't decide when and how to take notes.
E. Do you do the following things while listening:	
14. Relate what the speaker is saying to past knowledge and experience.	14. Think of other things during your extra thinking time.
15. Look in the direction of the speaker.	15. Doodle, look out the window, or watch other listeners.
16. Evaluate the speech as you hear and understand it.	16. Pre-judge the speech on the basis of speaker, subject, or situation.

17. Are you attentive, accepting your responsibility as a listener?	17. Fake attention or expect the speaker to command your attention.
18. Eliminate or quickly adjust to distractions in yourself.	18. Dwell on the distractions within yourself or create them.
19. Take notes suitable for your purpose.	19. Take the same kind of notes in all situations.
20. Try ro reconstruct the organizational pattern of the speech.	20. Are you unaware of the structure or organization of the specch?
21. Listen to locate the central idea.	21. Listen for facts.
22. Consider relationship between points made by the speaker.	22. Are you unaware of or unwilling to look for relationships between points.
23. Recognize the difference between facts and opinions.	23. Confuse facts and opinions.
24. Recognize the purpose of illustrations and examples used.	24. Are you confused and diverted by examples and illustrations?
25. Do you understand the figurative language used-analogy, metaphor, etc.?	25. Do you fail to understand the figures of speech used?
26. Select important details for retention.	26. Try to remember all details.
27. Are you aware of implications and inferences in what is said?	27. Are you unaware of implications in a speech?
28. Can you distinguish relevant from irrelevant material in the speech?	28. Do you fail to discover which material is relevant and which is irrelevant?
29. Determining new word meanings by reference to context.	29. Ignore new words in the speech or try to recall dictionary definitions.
30. Are you aware of loaded words, emotional slanting, and semantics errors?	30. Are you swayed unknowingly by emotional language and propaganda appeals?
31. Try to relate what is said to yourself and your interests.	31. Do you get "nothing out of the speech" which is helpful to yourself?
32. Overlook any inadequacies in speech content and delivery.	32. Do you dwell on inadequacies in content and delivery?
33. Recognize use of devices such as: introduction, transition, repetition, summary, conclusion.	33. Do you fail to recognize compositional and structural devices?
34. Recognize the effect of emphasis, inflection, rate, volume, gesture, and quality on meaning.	34. Are you unaware of influence factors of delivery on meaning?

35. Interpret what you hear in terms of the speaker's stated or implied purpose.	35. Do you fail to recognize the speaker's purpose?

F. Follow up your listening in the following ways:

36. Be able to give an accurate restatement of the main points in the speech.	36. Recall disconnected points or unimportant details.
37. Ask questions of the speaker if there is an opportunity.	37. Ask no questions and are impatient with those who do.
38. Talk about what has been said with others.	38. Talk about the speaker rather than what he said.
39. Construct an outline of the speech from your notes.	39. Neither make an outline nor review your notes.
40. Look for opportunities to refer to what was said in speaking or writing.	40. Want to forget the whole affair as quickly as possible.

(Karl F. Robinson and Charlotte Lee, Speech in Action, 1965, pp. 29-39.)

LISTENING IN THE SCHOOLS

Section III

Research in Listening

In 1926, Paul Rankin began a systematic study of the listening process. Since then, much research has been done on the nature of listening, its relationship with other language skills, its performance assessment, and related matters such as learner characteristics and listening rates. Hook (1965) reports that in the 1950s and '60s, about one hundred M. A. and Ph. D. theses were done on the nature of listening or on techniques for teaching it. A review of some of the more significant studies should provide teachers with a theoretical framework for developing practical strategies.

Value of Listening Instruction

Klee (1949) found that third and fourth graders acquired misleading concepts about foreigners from mass media stereotypes. At that time, radio was a major form of entertainment. It appears that the quality of the listening material affected the students' attitudes. In a similar study, Rosnow (1972) dealt with development of attitudes in children as young as age four. Because children form such attitudes largely on the basis of what they hear, the importance of guidance and listening instruction is not debatable.

Durell and Murphy (1953) discovered that at all grade and IQ levels, listening instruction may have an impact on the development of reading skills. Devine (1967, 1968) and Scheenberg (1977) also found that the teaching of listening skills has many benefits not accounted for totally by intelligence and age. Russell (1964), Olsen (1966), and Duker (1969) conducted studies which support systematic instruction in listening. Lane and Miller (1972) and Trebilcock(1970) also found that direct instruction results in improved comprehension of material heard and read.

Listening and Reading

Lundsteen (1979) suggests that improvement in reading skill doesn't automatically result in growth of listening skill; listening proficiency may decrease as [illegible] and reading ability increase. Swalm (1972) found that reading and listening are of an equal level of difficulty for learners in early grades if the material is on the learner's maturity level; as the material becomes more difficult, listening becomes the better avenue. Walker (1974-75) showed that printed language is more precise than spontaneous speech and could be the cause of some students' difficulty in learning to read. The same researcher (1975-76) found listening performance to be inferior to reading performance when learning from reading a book and learning from a videotape were compared. Guthrie and Tyler (1976) compared the psychological processing techniques in reading and listening for good and poor readers. For average students, the demands were similar for reading and listening. For poor learners, the linguistic processes were different for words as opposed to those spoken and read.

Schneeburg (1977) found that listening to the reading of a book while reading it increased the reading scores on standardized tests. Cunningham (1975) described a technique that seemed useful for transferring listening skills to reading.

Instructional Effects

Wetstone and Friedlander (1974) tested various methods of teaching listening and found videotape to be more effective than either "live" presentation or audio cassette. Bursuk (1971) found a combination of listening and reading to be particularly effective for auditory learners or for students with no modality choice. Blackburn (1976), in a study of Title I students, found that those who had daily lessons in listening were superior to those who did not. Marascuilo (1972) tested pupils in eleven isolated comprehension listening skills and concluded that direct instruction in those skills were effective. Swalm (1972, 1974) cautioned that no single method of teaching listening should be used in a given classroom of heterogeneously grouped children.

Learner Characteristics

Frentz (1971) and Ramsey (1972) found students' use of Black dialect or standard English to have no bearing on their ability to answer questions about stories that had been heard. Johnson (1973), however, found that Black dialect-speaking students sometimes failed to hear certain final consonants, with consequent loss of comprehension.

Penfield and Marascuilo (1972) concluded from their study of elementary pupils that listening instruction narrowed the gap in listening ability between learners separated by socioeconomic status. They also discovered that girls made more improvement than boys in listening performance, but Neville (1975) found just the opposite.

McCroskey and Thompson (1973), studying disadvantaged youth, found that a relatively slow rate of presentation is beneficial to the auditorially and verbally deficient. Neville (1975) and Riding (1975), in analyses of presentation rates, insisted that slower rates produced better learning with remedial readers, especially when syntax and organization were complex.

Swalm (1972) studied comprehension of listening, oral reading, and silent reading. Above average readers fared better in both forms of reading than in listening. Below average readers found listening to be a more effective means of gaining comprehension. The same researcher conducted a similar study two years later, comparing only listening and silent reading. The results were similar. His conclusion: varied approaches for different learning modalities should be used.

Role of the Teacher in Listening Instruction

The foregoing research summary should be viewed with caution. Likewise, the description of the listening process given in a previous section must not be viewed as a rigid, linear arrangement. Teachers may extract useful research and modify it for their own classes, but never should every research project be viewed as definitive. Lundsteen (1979) says

> When researchers suggest a performance hierarchy, some teachers may appropriate it unwisely and use it as a rigid accountability model.
>
> However, listening is more than the sum of isolated skills. The idea of fitting skill upon skill, as in constructing a tinkertoy, will not solve most problems.

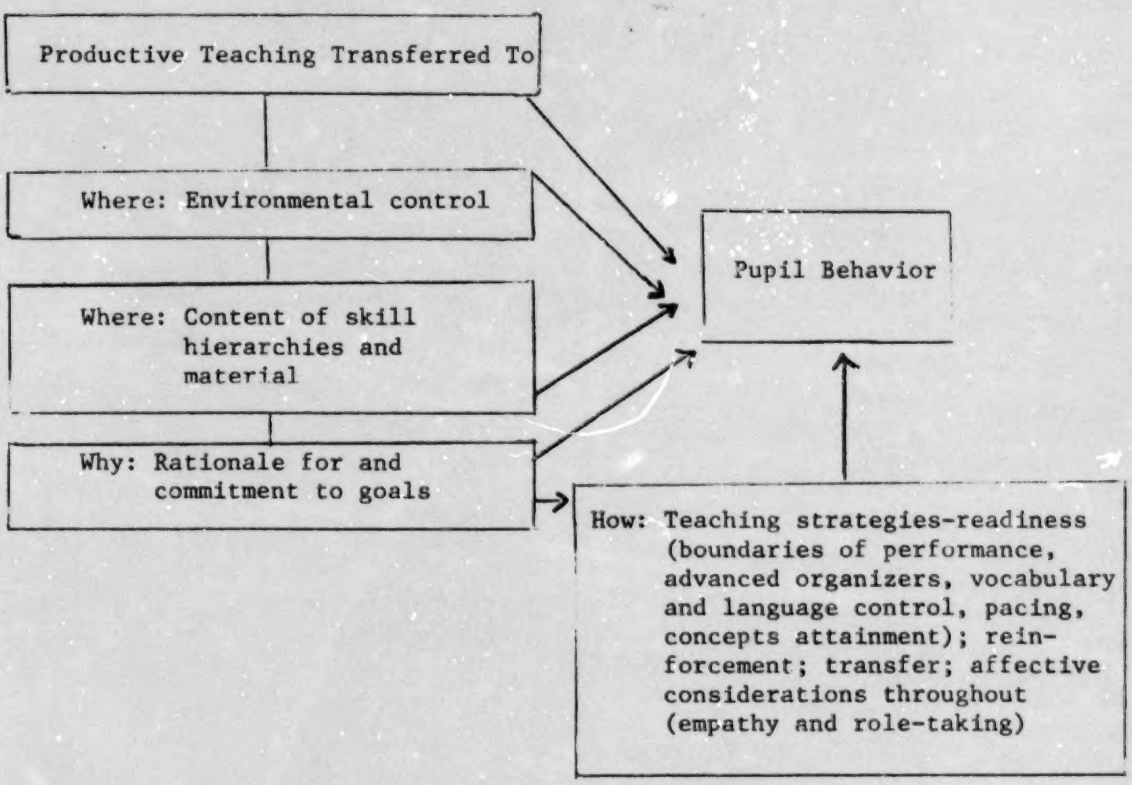
With this understanding, we will examine some responsibilities of teachers in listening instruction. Lundsteen (1979) sees these duties as extremely important ones:

1. To provide a classroom environment that optimizes learning channels.
2. To set realistic goals for listening performance.
3. To diagnose, select, and appraise an appropriate sequence of skills for individual learners.
4. To select or develop varied listening material for specific skills and subskills at an appropriate level of difficulty and with variety.
5. To avoid presenting too much listening material at one time.
6. To know why listening instruction is important and to guide children to this realization.
7. To use challenging vocabulary and syntax that stimulate children to reach ahead of their boundaries.
8. To pose questions that lead to careful listening and thinking.
9. To provide feedback.
10. To use listening time wisely and selectively.

Appendix I contains a checklist for teachers.

Role of the Student in Listening Instruction

Some of the following suggestions are more suitable for high school students than for middle school pupils, but all of them can be handled at each level. Specifically, students need each element of this diagram designed by Lundsteen (1979).


Productive Teaching Transferred To
Where: Environmental control
Where: Content of skill hierarchies and material
Why: Rationale for and commitment to goals
Pupil Behavior
How: Teaching strategies-readiness (boundaries of performance, advanced organizers, vocabulary and language control, pacing, concepts attainment); reinforcement; transfer; affective considerations throughout (empathy and role-taking)

Transformed into a list, the needs of students are:

1. To learn to use the listening environment more effectively.
   a. To know optimal physical listening conditions.
   b. To discover, verify, experiment with, and do research on their listening and hearing.
   c. To learn to do something about what they hear.
      (1) To be aware of different levels of listening and noise
      (2) To be aware of different purposes of listening.
      (3) To formulate standards of good listening in various situations.
      (4) To improve their understanding of the listening process.
      (5) To learn to fix, and keep, attention on what they wish to hear.
      (6) To learn what other children will listen to.
      (7) To learn to locate and use listening material.
      (8) To learn to ask questions when in doubt about meaning.
      (9) To share with the sender the responsibility for communication.

(10) To learn to use listening time wisely, to be selective.

(11) To be responsible for self-evaluation, understanding abilities, skills, appreciations.

(12) To exploit (to their advantage) the rate differential between thought and speech.

d. To learn to solve personal problems the child is encountering now and will encounter in the future, partly through understanding how the listening process of "meeting of minds" can help.

2. To develop a sense of responsibility and concern for communication in the local community.
   a. To realize the importance of listening.
   b. To understand the relationship of listening to economic competency.

3. To begin to understand something of her or his cultural heritage in communication and its relationship to the present and the future.

4. To help plan, revise, and administer the program.

5. To help select, gather, and distribute supplies and materials.

6. To help identify those pupils in need of special help and those able to provide that help.

7. To help lead discussions, conduct interviews, tutor, and counsel.

8. To help to develop and maintain a high level of morale, rapport, and control.

9. To help to receive, consider, and act upon suggestions and complaints.

10. To help in selecting, constructing, administering, scoring, and evaluating pupil-formulated tests or other means of self-assessment.

11. To help evaluate performance and progress (keeping track of success has motivational value).

12. Generally, to help make decisions on "what" (materials, activities), "why" (objectives), "how" (procedures), ""when" (setting up the schedules), "who"(people on what committees), "where" (in the neighboring classroom, library, auditorium), and "how well"(evaluative procedures).

Williams (1972) developed a self-evaluation guide for students to use in determining progress in listening.

1. Am I aware of different background sounds in movie, radio, or television production.

2. Am I aware of the choice of words used by the speaker?

3. Am I aware of whether or not the speaker arrived at a conclusion?

4. Am I aware of incorrect statement made by the speaker?

5. Am I aware of facts omitted by the speaker?

6. Am I aware of how the speaker went from one idea to another?

7. Am I aware of assumptions or judgements made by the speaker?

8. Am I aware of propaganda devices (emotional words, distorted facts, exaggerations) used by the speaker?

Questions like thse apply to almost any oral presentation - oral book reports, TV shows and movies, formal speeches, principals' announcements. Additional questions in the checklist include:

1. Can I list at least five or more basic ideas after listening to a speech or talk?

2. Can I list at least five facts after listening to a discussion?

3. Can I list at least five opinions of the speaker?

4. Can I list at leaot three opinions of my own after listening to a speech.

5. Can I take meaningful notes or outline the main points stated by the speaker?

6. Can I list the conclusions made by the speaker?

7. Can I state the main ideas of the speaker which support his conclusions?

8. Can I draw any of my own conclusions after listening?

9. Can I list statements made by the speaker which do not justify his conclusions?

10. Can I list two two assumptions made by the speaker?

11. Can I list two propaganda techniques used by the speaker?

12. Can I list two emotional statements made by the speaker?

13. Can I list the logical order of a speaker's talk?

14. Can I list the modes of logic such as inductive and deductive reasoning, syllogisms, and other reasoning patterns?

By using such questions on a regular basis, students can learn to evaluate the listening habits of others as well as their own.

The Role of the School and Administrators in Listening Instruction

Teachers and students are not the only participants in the improvement of listening. The school in general, and its administrators in particular, play a large part in the promotion of effective and efficient listening habits. After reviewing the professional literature, Lundsteen (1979) developed the following list of school/administrative duties:

1. To view the development of all of the verbal skills-listening, speaking, reading, and writing -- and their integration with one another and with thinking as the major responsibility of the school.

2. To make provisions for instruction that is systematic and developmental (as well as incidental), i.e., a total school continuum of which all staff are aware.

3. To make available specific inservice training that focuses on felt need of both new teachers, who always need help, and experienced teachers who missed learning about listening or need stimulation if only to reject the shallow comfort of routine. To provide released time for such inservice training.

4. To provide for parent education as well as teacher education by means of brochures, meetings, and classroom visits designed to present the philosophy and goals of the language program, which is so thoroughly understood and accepted by the staff that it it can be communicated to laymen.

5. With staff acceptance, to provide astute decision making that is based on an appropriate combination of directives, principal-faculty discussion, and faculty decisions about the language program.

6. To provide and coordinate a program that retains what is useful in the old, selects what is valuable from the new, and actively incorporates this information by using sources such as some of those given in this book.

7. To furnish the materials, hardware, and setting for a stimulating and varied listening environment.

8. To provide for individual differences in listening.

9. To help children use their own languge, whatever it is, as an effective tool.

10. To support the fulfillment of the teacher and pupil roles.

11. To provide a feedback mechanism to inform others of successes and failures of the program.

The recommendations here are consistent with the National Association of Secondary School Principals' "Recommendations for Teaching Students to Receive Ideas" (1960). That organization also suggested that principals meet with English teachers to decide what improvements are needed to provide systematic, sequential programs for speaking and listening.

Although few American schools are currently giving attention to listening, there are some outstanding programs in place. Marascuilo and Penfield (1972) reported on extensive programs for second, fifth, eighth, and eleventh graders in one district. Reuter (1969) described the "Dial-a-Tape" system used by School District Twelve in Adams City, Colorado to teach listening skills across grade levels and content areas. Lundsteen (1979) uses the Loveland, Colorado and Alameda County, California school systems as models of leadership in the speaking-listening areas. Tutolo (1977), Vukelich (1976), and Giannagelo and Frazee (1975) explored ways effective school programs are organized.

Effective listening can and should be encouraged through administrative leadership.

Objectives for Listening

What are the instructional objectives for listening? This question cannot be answered to the satisfaction of every teacher and school district, but useful listings of specific skills can be developed. A clear sequence of competencies can help teachers plan worthwhile activities that go far beyond the usual "lip service" variety commonly found in English classes. Such a taxonomy also provides schools with a foundation for accountability and assessment of language arts programs.

The instructor who is aware of the benefits of careful planning will probably have pupils who are achieving listening skill more rapidly than the teacher who says "I'm going to teach more listening" Lundsteen (1979). Conscientious teachers, in other words, will have objectives that are much better than the type that reads: "After listening to what I have to say, the child will be able to tell me what I said" (Markle 1973). Still, it is genuinely hard to specify which objective to use, for there is no definitive list. Kellogg (1966), asking teachers "What is a listening skill," found that virtually no one knew. A look at some ways of generating goals and objectives might therefore be beneficial. Liberal adaptations of the work of Kellogg (1966) will be used.

The A, B, C's of Listening

We can conceptualize three levels of listening ranging from the least to the most intellectually difficult:

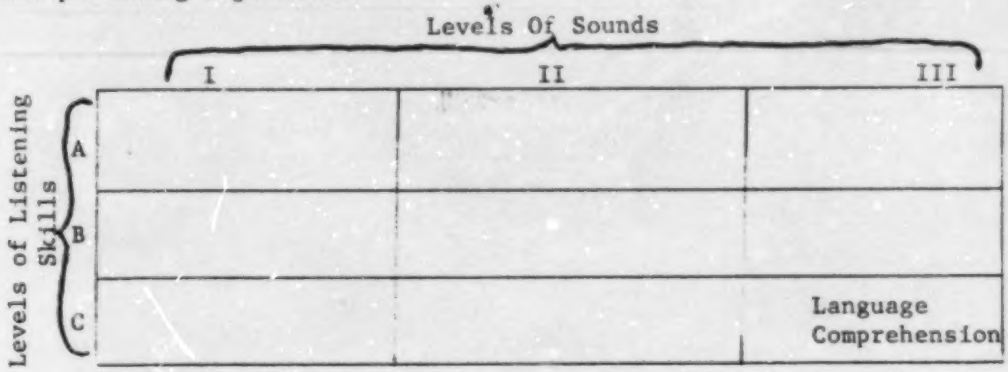
Level A = Acuity (perception of sounds)
Level B = Discrimination among sounds
Level C = Comprehension of sounds (meaning)

These levels may form a hierarchy. People without the ability to perceive sounds obviously are not able to discriminate and comprehend sounds. Likewise, those who hear but cannot discriminate will probably not be able to decode the symbolic and syntactic structures that lend meaning to the sounds.

We can now examine the kinds of sounds in our environment:

Level I = sounds in nature
Level II = sounds made by artifical objects
Level III = sounds made in speaking

By combining the two levels of skill and sound, we can develop a scheme for producing objectives:



Notice that comprehension takes place in the final cell -- that is, after acuity and discrimination have operated effectively.

Skill of Comprehension

In reading, comprehension involves getting meaning from black inkmarks (symbols, words) on a page. Listening operates in a similar fashion, with the exception of the visual task. A listener hears sounds and then extracts meaning from them. There are several skills involved in this system. Bloom (1956) delineated these progressive dimensions in comprehension:

1. Knowledge of specifics. Recall and recognition. (Who? What? Where? When?)

2. Comprehension. Translation (How else can it be said?). Interpretation (What does it mean? How does it relate?). Extrapolation (What came before? What is next?).

3. Application. How do you use it? How do you use it in still another way?

4. Analysis. What are its parts? How do you classify them?

5. Synthesis. Includes divergent thinking, creative problem solving: how do you form new "wholes," invent, and compose, using your own ideas?

6. Evaluation. Judge, using standards; choose, tell why; debate means and ends.

The following chart contains some sample listening tasks correlated to the levels of the taxonomy:

Comprehension Skill	Listen to....
Knowledge	recall details in a talk (e.g., "How long is the railroad?")
Comprehension	interpret information (e.g., "What did the speaker mean when he wrote...")
Application	use information, skills (e.g., "Tell what the speaker's comments mean to you.")

Comprehension Skill	Listen to...
Analysis	tell the parts, classify sections (e.g., "What were the major divisions of the talk? How did the speaker move from one topic to the next?"
Synthesis	use own ideas in an original creation (e.g., "Prepare your talk on...").
Evaluation	assess effectivenss (e.g. "Evaluate the effectiveness of this speaker's presentation using the criteria developed in class.")

The professional literature is replete with concerns about the limited scope of teachers' questions, both oral and written. It appears that very few English teachers ask questions beyond the level of comprehension. If students are to use the language arts with proficiency in their daily lives, they must have learning opportunities involving all levels of Bloom's taxonomy. In the case of listening activities, it is especially imperative that teachers give students numerous experiences at every level. If the six-part structure of this approach seems too cumbersome, a division can be made by grouping the levels into "general listening" and "critical listening." Thus, the first five levels of Bloom's diagram would fall into the "general" category; the "evaluation" section would then coincide with the "critical" category. The following is a typical collection of such goals (Lundsteen 1979):

General Listening:

1. Remembering significant details accurately (knowldege of specifics)
2. Remembering simple sequences of words and ideas
3. Following oral directions
4. Paraphrasing a spoken message (comprehension by translation)
5. Following a sequence in (a) plot development, (b) character development, (c) speaker's argument
6. Understanding denotative (literal) meaning of words
7. Understanding connotative meanings of words (comprehension by interpretation)

8. Understanding meaning of words from spoken context (comprehension by translation and interpretation)

9. Listening for implications of significant details (analysis and interpretation)

10. Listening for implications of main ideas

11. Answering and formulating questions (interactive listening)

12. Identifying main ideas and summarizing (combining and synthesizing the who, what, when, where, and why)

13. Understanding relationships among ideas and the organizational pattern well enough to predict what may come next (comprehension by extrapolation)

14. Connecting the spoken material with previous experience and planning action (application)

15. Listening to imagine and to extend for enjoyment and emotional response (affective-toned synthesizing)

Critical Listening:

1. Distinguishing fact from fancy, according to criteria

2. Judging validity and adequacy of main ideas, arguments, and hypotheses

3. Distinguishing well-supported statements from opinion and judgment and evaluating them

4. Distinguishing well-supported statement from irrelevant ones and evaluating them

5. Inspecting, comparing, and contrasting ideas and arriving at a conclusion about statements, such as the appropriateness and appeal of one descriptive word over another

6. Evaluating the use of fallacies, such as (a) self-contradictions, (b) avoiding the question at issue, (c) hasty or false generalization, (d) false analogy, (e) failure to present all choices, (f) appealing to ignorance

7. Recognizing and judging the effects of various devices the speaker may use to influence the listener, such as (a) music. (b) "loaded" words, (c) voice intonation, (d) propaganda, sales pressure-that is, identifying affective loading in communication and evaluating it

8. Detecting and evaluating the bias and prejudice of a speaker or of a point of view

9. Evaluating the qualifications of a speaker

10. Planning to evaluate the ways in which a speaker's ideas might be applied in a new situation

Appendix II contains a sample advertising assignment involving all the levels in the taxonomy.

Additional Objectives

The South Carolina Basic Skills Assessment Program contains no objectives for listening. However, English teachers should not assume that this critical skill does not have to be taught. The objectives previously given could easily be adapted for use in individual classes. Furthermore, an examination of listening guides from other districts and states should provide helpful information to help South Carolina teachers implement worthwhile goals and strategies. Two such guides are particularly impressive.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has published a communication guide that includes listening skills grouped under these four main processes:

Sensing. Attending to and concentrating on oral messages, overcoming distractions.

Interpreting. Attaching meaning to messages, understanding the meaning as the speaker intended it, choosing main ideas and supporting details, undertanding the relationship between main ideas and supporting material, and asking clarifying questions.

Evaluating. Understanding methods of argumentation, reasoning, fallacies, insufficient evidence, propaganda devices.

Responding. Reacting, recalling, responding tactfully.

Incidentally, the "Evaluating" section is unlike that found in many other manuals. The Wisconsin model asserts that evaluation involves more than the exercise of critical judgments. That is, skilled listeners know when to be empathic and appreciative, when to withold criticism and offer support and understanding to speakers. Each section of this outstanding communication guide contains detailed classroom exercises that are adaptable for various levels of students.

The Massachusetts Department of Education has produced a "Summary Report" of that state's Basic Skills Law, including a section on listening. Eleven objectives are included in the program:

A. Basic Listening Skills

1. Recognize words and phrases used by the speaker

2. Indicate why the speaker can or cannot be understood

B. Understanding What You Hear

1. Understand spoken words and ideas

2. Identify and understand main ideas

3. Associate important details with main ideas

4. Understand descriptions of events and experiences

5. Understand speaker's purpose

C. Using What You Hear

1. Understand and respond to survival words used in emergency situations

2. Summarize information and draw conclusions

3. Recognize when words and phrases are used to convince or persuade

4. Follow straightforward directions

Students are given a test that includes a variety of listening passages and asks a variety of questions. Naturally, the passages reflect the objectives associated with specific listening situations, while the questions reflect objectives dealing with general listening skills. Some of the test items include

- a news story
- a public service announcement

- a commercial

- a telephone conversation

- a teacher's announcement

Students are given booklets containing instructions and multiple choice questions. Questions and response items are read aloud after a taped passage is played. Students mark their responses on answer sheets. Appendix III presents a sample item from the test.

Sample objectives and activities from these and other manuals can help teachers address the critical listening needs of students.

Instruction in Listening: Sample Activities

One of the primary goals of listening instruction is that of providing aural experiences that can produce good listening habits. Students need direct instruction in specific listening skills, not just notes about the process. Russell and Hennings (1979) warn that

> Effective listening behaviors are not acquired by reading about the nature of the listening act as described in some textbook series, by reading or composing charts on qualities of good listening, or by talking about general characteristics of good listening. This type of activity wastes time that could be spent performing listening tasks that focus on specific components of the process.

The activities presented in this section may be idea generators for teachers. Adapted from many sources, most of these projects were written by actual classroom teachers who had successfully used them. The list invites modification, revision, or supplement.

Remembering Names

Share with students Sells' (1973) "Ace Memory Training System:": A = Attention, C = Concentration, E = Expression. Focus on the person you're meeting, latch onto his name, pay attention to him. Concentrate on the person. Make eye contact, shake hands, speak directly to him, sustain interest. Keep expressing the person's name during the conversation ("I agree, Mr. Peterson, but...").

Short Story Questions

Play or read a story such as Poe's "Cask of Amontillado." Provide students with a listening guide contaning questions about time of year, name of narrator, kinds of images, etc. Have the class summarize the story in about one hundred words, or let them write a fifty-word opinion. Give a true-false test based on the story.

Paragraph/Essay Questions

Read an essay or paragraph to the class. Have the students identify main idea(s), supporting details, motivational appeals, patterns of organization, characteristics of language, etc.

Vocabulary

Read to students various stems of analogies; let them complete the stem on their answer sheets. Practice choral pronunciation of words. Incorporate words from vocabulary tests into literary activities, including discussions.

Notetaking

When dictating notes, stress writing of most important points. Give out sample, mimeographed notes for students to use as models. (See Divesta and Gray 1972-73, and Haun 1983 for more information.)

Quizzes

Let unit tests cover some information presented in lectures and discussions.

Understanding Organization

Discuss the many ways of organizing and developing speeches. Let students listen to speeches, both live and recorded, and identify the kinds of organization and development used.

Details and Language Signals

Read a newspaper story to the class. Have them answer specific questions dealing with details. Let them identify transitional expressions that indicate new ideas. Vary the procedure by using recorded radio and TV reports.

TV/Radio Time, Programs

Have students analyze the amount of time they spend watching TV and listening to radio. Invite them to formulate lists of worthwhile programs and explain their criteria. Have them watch/listen to these programs, noting a) use of dialects, b) grammar, c) attitudes, d) diction, e) propaganda, f) political biases. Let them do oral reviews of same selected programs.

Pictures

Have students sketch what they hear in a reading passage (e.g., "Great billows of clouds hung on the horizon.") Try this with language that is particularly striking. Include idiomatic expressions for fun (e.g., "Her heart was in her throat," "The teacher hit the ceiling," etc.).

Multiple Meanings

Read and discuss differences in meaning of the same word used in different ways. For example, "The horse walks with a limp" vs. "How limp her hair looks!"

Tall Tales

Read or play some of these, having students listen for exaggerated details or events.

Intonation

Have students read expressions like these, putting emphasis on different parts: "The house in on fire," "Joe's going away to college," etc. Discuss how meaning is affected by changes in stress.

Transformation

Read sets of sentences to the class. Instruct them to make changes (present tense to past, declarative to interrogative, simple to complex, etc.).

Cutting Out Words

Read a long sentence and ask students to identify words that could be omitted. Example: "The ten bright, enthusiastic, eager school children in the fifth grade at Royall Elementary School in Florence rushed fast and quickly into their new classrooms, quietly and peacefully headed for their own seats, and carefully opened the colorful, attractive books placed on their own desks."

Quarrels

Record two mock quarrels. In the first, the speakers should yell, be defensive, argue forcefully. In the second, they should argue intelligently and objectively, avoiding personal attacks. Ask the students to listen to the two selections and point out differences. Develop lists of guidelines for reasonably expressing differences of opinion. (See Stanford 1970 for more information.)

Letter to the Editor

Read various letters found in newspapers and magazines. Have students identify loaded words and expressions, then have them "uncharge" those segments by suggesting alternative wording.

Mood

After reading a literary selection to the class, let them react to it affectively. Ask: How did this piece make you feel? Did your feelings change as you listened? If so, why?

Propaganda

a) Record several commercials from radio or TV and play them for the class. Let students look for various kinds of appeals.
b) Do the same with political advertisements or commentaries analyze the kinds of propaganda presented.

Poems/Diction

Play a recording of Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, or some other poet reading one of his works. Distribute mimeographed copies of the poem in advance. As the reading progresses, students should underline words that are stressed, circle terms that are spoken with unusual softness, put carets at pauses, etc. Discussion should follow.

Morals, Themes

Read several short stories or fables to the students. Stop before giving the theme or moral (if it is expressed). Have the student state the theme in their own words or choose the most accurate theme from a given list.

Reviewing for Tests

The day before a literature test, start a review by asking each student to say two or three sentences about a story, its author, its characters, its theme, etc. Other students can guess the answer.

Dramatic Readings

After a student or group performance of a literary piece, ask these questions: a) Was enough material spoken to give listeners a clear picture of the action/characters/plot? b) Did the readers express meaning effectively through stress, pauses, volume and pitch variation? c) Did vocal tones express appropriate feelings such as worry, hate, fear, excitement, surprise, or seriousness?

Reading to Students

Students in all grades should be read to at various times during the year. These questions can serve to heighten students' skills in listening: a) What similarities did you notice between this story/poem/play and the one(s) I read to you last time? b) How does _____ (character) make a good friend? e) Why did _____ (character) act as he did? f) Listen for similarities/ differences between the passage and the other three I just read to you.

Body Language

Study gestures - what they are, why people use them, how they can be effective, etc. During oral reports and other presentations, classmates can evaluate each other's use of body language.

Courtesy in Speaking/Listening

Allow students to make up lists of expressions that shouldn't be used during conversation. Example: "Your're dead wrong," "I've never heard such silly ideas," "That's ridiculous," "Your're nuts!" Contrast these with positive expressions, Example: "That's a really good point, John, but....," "That may be true, but....," "I'd like to hear more."

Drawing Conclusions

Read a series of paragraphs to which students must add the concluding statement or climax.

Prediction

Read stories with clear-cut sequences of events. Ask students to state what will happen next. Read the rest of the story to check accuracy of predictions.

Games, Puzzles

With more gifted classes, let students make up original games and give oral directions to classmates. Check listening by judging how accurately directions are followed.

Inferences

Read or play a script involving a telephone converstation in which only one speaker is heard. Check listening skills by asking students to state, orally or in writing, what the other person might have said. Bob Newhart's "Button-down Mind" album contains some excellent material that can be used for this.

Main Idea

Read an interesting paragraph to the class. Check understanding of main idea by having the students a) select from a list a proper title for the paragraph, b) write their own titles, c) state the main idea in their own words, d) write a newspaper headline, news flash, or telegram expressing the main point of the paragraph.

Functional Dictation

In the last few minutes of class, read or play different kinds of announcements and messages. Have students take down, on paper, the major facts a listener would need to recall. (See Conway 1970.)

Silent Movies

Show a silent movie without captions. Have students compose dialogue and share their words with the class. As an alternative, show a sound movie with the volume tuned out. Let students write scripts. Discuss their work, then show the film with the sound running. Comparisons can then be made. (See Lasser 1973).

Guest Speaker

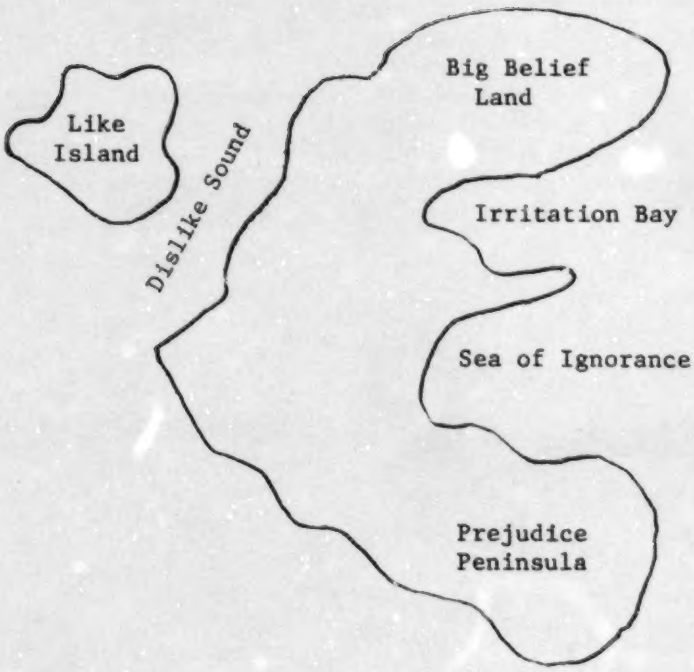
Invite a speaker to talk to the class for five to ten minutes. Pupils should then ask questions. Proivde a listening guide before the visit so that the class will be prepared to note major points and supporting details. (See Appendix IV for a sample guide.)

Sequence

Cut up a story into numbered sections that leave off at some exciting point. Let the students put the parts together. Read or play the selection; students can check the accuracy of their work.

Self-map

As a followup to discussions, lectures, and other oral presentations, students may make notations on this map to indicate their reactions. Discussion should follow.



Right or Wrong?

a) As the teacher reads a story, students listen for instances involving moral dilemmas or acts of debatable morality. Pauses will allow the class to jot down words that reveal judgments. Individuals can then evaluate the noted acts in these terms: very right, right, wrong, very wrong. In subsequent discussions, students should give reasons and opinions to support their views.

b) Read a vignette. Stop at a critical point ("Mike saw his friend steal the watch, so he..."). Brainstorm possible actions without value judgments, then ask, "Which would be the best - morally right - answers?"

Speaking-Listening Index

This formula can be used to evaluate a speaker's ability to convey main ideas. It may also have value as a measure of listening ability. While one student speaks, others write down what they believe is the theme of the speech and each of the chief supporting ideas. What they write is then compared with the speaker's own written statement of theme and supporting ideas.

$$I = \frac{P + 2c}{.02 N_1 Ne}$$

I = index. P = number of partially correct statements by all members of the class. C = number of correct statements by all members of the class. N_1 = number of speaker's items. N_e = number of listeners. If a class of 30 students has 64 partially correct statements and 58 correct ones (assuming the speaker had 5 items),

$$I = \frac{64 + (2 \times 58)}{.02 \times 5 \times 30} = \frac{180}{3} = 60 \text{ (a high figure!)}$$

Each listener could measure his listening ability by simplifying the formula to

$$\frac{P + 2C}{.02 N_1}$$

Thus, if a student had two partially correct statements and one correct out of a possible five, his index would be

$$\frac{2 + (2 \times 1)}{.02 \times 5} = \frac{4}{.10} = 40$$

Consistent attainment of a listening index of 60 or above should be the goal. See Ewing (1945) for a complete treatment of this approach.

APPENDIX I

Checklist of Listening Behaviors for Teachers

What kinds of listening do I do myself?

Do I talk too much in school or do I listen more than I talk? (Observe frequencies.)

Do I encourage the children to speak more than a single word or thought in response to a question?

Do I ensure that my choice of words does not present an impossible hurdle to the child?

But do I, on occasion, also use words that stretch listening and do I get meaning? (Develop a log or card system for pupils to keep.)

Are my questions so thought-provoking that my question time is less than pupil answer time?

Do children in my class follow each other spontaneously and independently without directing each comment to me, and do they react to peers as well as to adults? (Analyze changes in technique and impact according to taped sequences.)

When I give oral directions, do I prepare the pupils for what is to come and then avoid repetition? Are the directions worth hearing?

Are my directions ambiguous? (When children fail to follow directions, it may be they are avoiding an ambiguous situation.)

Is the purpose of each activity understood by each child? (Lack of pupil comprehension may result from a lack of defined purpose on the part of the teacher.)

Do I relate good listening habits to all classroom activities; is the classroom environment favorable?

Do I give the poor reader but good listener an opportunity to excel through the testing of material presented orally?

Do I enhance the child's comprehension by providing organization of the spoken material (e.g., a preview, an opportunity for pupils to relate their own past experience to the purposes of the materials)?

Whenever possible do I take time to be a "listening teacher "(empathetic, ready to simply lean forward and say, "Tell me ...."}? Do I give my full attention and expect the child to begin speaking, then show constant interest, or do I reflect feeling in the manner of a clear mirror?

(Sara W. Lundsteen. Listening: Its Impact at all Levels on Reading and the Other Language Arts, 1979, pp. 124-125.)

APPENDIX II

Sample Listening Assignment

Task Cards for Developing Levels of Comprehension

Strand: Listening to Media-Advertising and Television

Overall Objectives: The child will analyze, compose, and evaluate an original TV advertisement.

Social Studies Concept: Demand is consumer willingness to buy a certain product at a given price.

1. Knowledge of specifics: Become an ad collector. Use food advertisements for examples or use a tape recorder to "collect" or recall commercials for different brands of a product you have chosen. Note the differences in the ads.

2. Comprehension: Using your own words, summarize and rewrite the commercials, aiming for an audience of your own age group or another selected group.

3. Application: Make a survey, asking (1) What is the person's favorite commercial about the product? (2) Why is it appealing to him or her? (3) Does it influence him or her to buy the product? Apply what you have understood and the skills you have developed from making earlier surveys.

4. Analysis: What are the minimum elements of an advertisment if it is to present necessary information. What are its parts? Conduct a survey to determine from a sample of "consumers" those parts of the advertisements that affect them most and why. Try ro include different types of consumers in your survey. If the advertisement is for food, spot how much nutritional information is actually given. Analyze how your reactions about the food (based on persuasion through child actors, lights, words, and canned laughter) might affect your health.

5. Synthesis: Write and produce your own thirty-second commerical for a product. Deicde what audience you appealing to how and you will appeal.

6. Evaluation: Plan and carry out an eva'uation of your advertisement. Ask a sample of potential consumers to react to your advertisement. Were you successful in light of the criteria you had set? Why or why not? What are the eseential parts of this kind of composing if a demand is to be created? What moral or ethical ideas (rights and wrongs) do you need to consider about the impact of the ad on viewers, such as their nutrition and health?

(Sara W. Lundsteen, Listening: Its Impact at all Levels on Reading and Other Language Arts, 1979 , pp 58-59.)

APPENDIX III

Sample Listening Assessment Item

TEACHER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

You are about to hear a recording of a teacher's announcement. After the annoucement you will be asked several questions about what you heard.

Now listen carefully.

Now, if I can have your attention for a few minutes, I'd like to explain a new assignment. Please settle down so everyone can hear.

After we finish our current unit, we'll have one free class period before break. What I'd like to do with this time is to have a party, but this won't be an ordinary party. It will be a special party because we're going to invite people from the past. And each one of you will be asked many questions about your life and what you did that was important, so this will require a little bit of preparation. Tomorrow we'll spend some time in class drawing up a list of names of famous, historical people. This way we'll get a lot of different ideas. Next, we'll put all of the names in a box and each draw one name. Then, before the party, you'll have to learn about the person whose name you draw. (Pause) So, if there are no questions, I'll go on with today's topic.

1. What is the main purpose of the teacher's announcement?

   A. To encourage students to read magazines and newspapers
   B. To explain a new assignment to the class?
   C. To remind students about school break
   D. To urge students to always come to class well prepared

2. What will the class study before break?

   A. People from the past
   B. Political parties
   C. Social customs
   D. Current events

3. What are the students supposed to do?

   A. Find out about a famous person
   B. Go to a costume party
   C. Write about a famous person
   D. Collect pictures of famous people

4. When will the students draw up a list of names?

   A. Before the end of the day
   B. Tomorrow
   C. Next week
   D. Before break

(Massachusetts Assessment of Basic Skills, 1979-80)

APPENDIX IV

Sample Guide for Listening

1. Details

2. Sequence

3. Main Ideas

4. Summary

Students may use this guide when listening to speeches and other oral presentations. Notes can be made about each part of the talk, and they should be discussed in class.

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